

Nancy's Story

Cashier

full-time,
benefits,
retail

2 Years



CNA

part-time,
no benefits,
nursing home

10 Years



RN

full-time,
benefits,
hospital



Hi, my name is Nancy, and I'm a Registered Nurse (RN). I love my job, but it's been a long road getting here. I was born and raised in Bridgeport, Connecticut. When I was 17, I had to drop out of high school because I unexpectedly became pregnant. I got my GED, but I was unsure of what I wanted for a career. Once I got my son into daycare, I worked as a cashier at Target. My job was 40 hours a week and had benefits, but I didn't want to work there for a long time. My grandma worked as a nurse and owned her home, so I figured that was probably a great way to make money and secure a good future for my family.

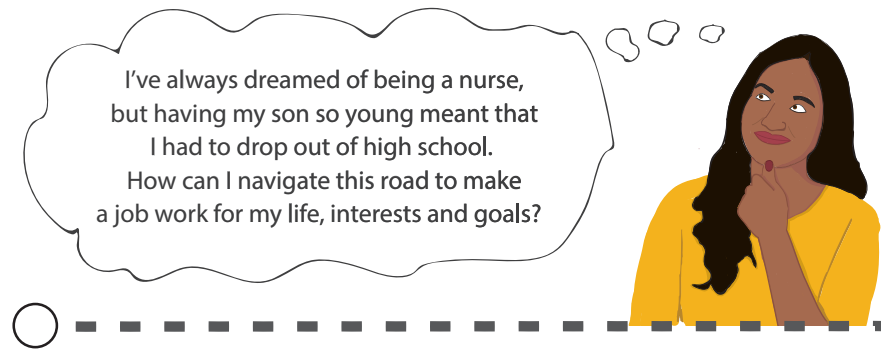
A friend of mine at Target was going to school at night to become a Patient Care Technician (PCT), and she told me that she got into the program through The Academy. So I called The Academy and enrolled. My Career Counselor told me that by 2020, most nurses would have to have a bachelor's degree in Nursing to get a job, which meant that becoming an RN was a long-term plan. So, I decided to get started by becoming a Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA). I even cut back my hours at Target to 20 hours a week to focus on the training.

I got my CNA license and started looking for a job. Then my son broke his arm while playing on the playground, and I had to pay hefty medical bills. I increased my hours at Target to 32, so I could receive medical benefits while my mom watched my son. Working this packed schedule and taking care of my son when I got home meant I was exhausted at the end of every day, making difficult to apply for jobs. Luckily, my son made a full recovery, and I decided to get back on track with my healthcare career. I worked with my Career Counselor and was able to find a part-time job as a CNA at a nursing home. It was only part-time, but I knew that this would help me build experience toward becoming an RN.

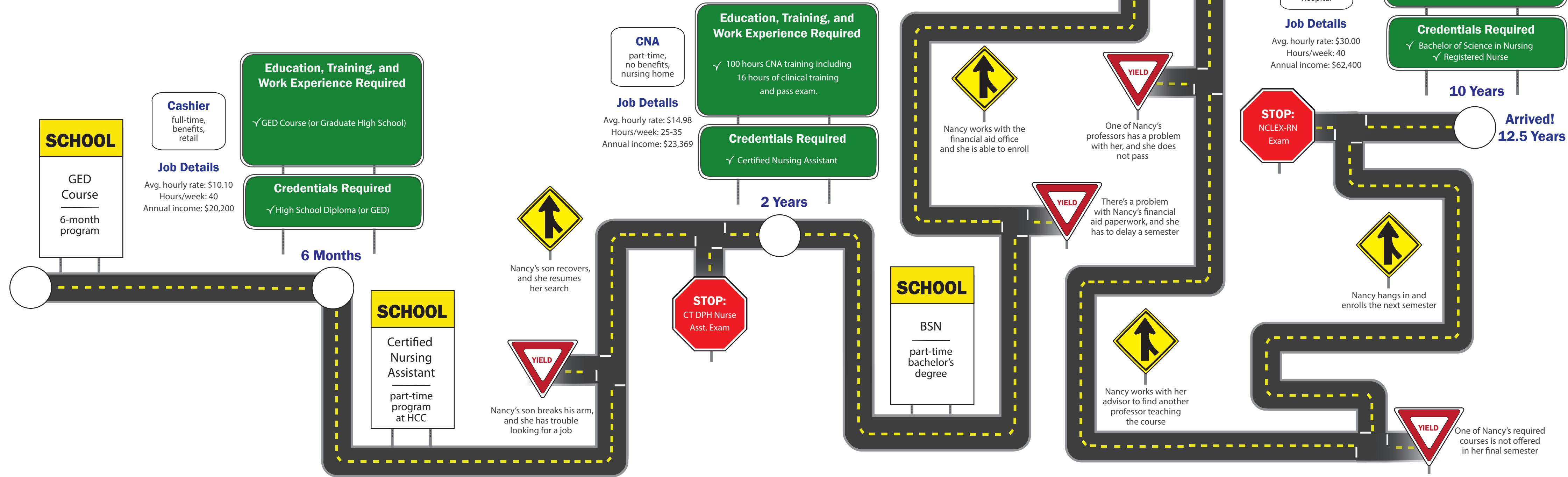
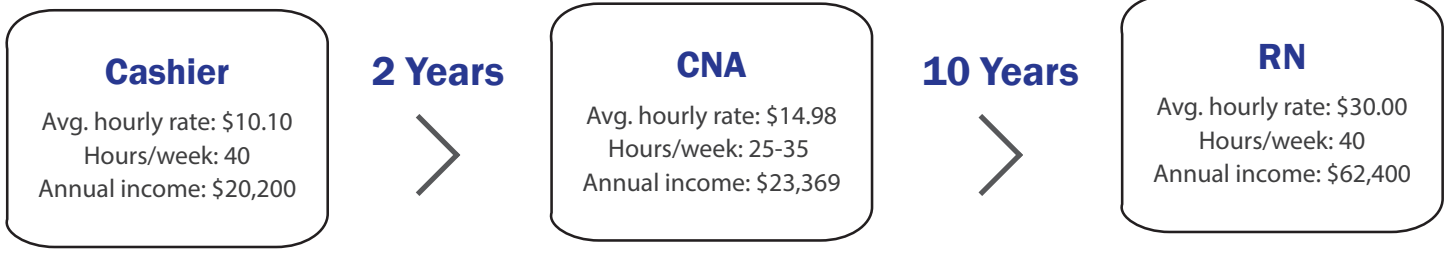
After 2 years working as a CNA, I felt financially secure enough to start college, so I enrolled in a BSN program. With some help from The Academy, I identified some scholarships, but some problems with my paperwork meant I couldn't go right away. They eventually figured out the issue, and I was able to enroll part-time, while still working as a CNA. In my second year in college, I had a professor who didn't really like me, and I wasn't able to earn a passing grade. I worked with my academic advisor, though, and she helped me find a class with a different professor. In my final year in the program, they didn't offer one of my required classes, but I hung in there and enrolled the next semester. Working and going to school part-time meant that it would take me much longer to earn my degree, but it was worth it to be able to support my family in the meantime. It ended up taking over 12 years, but I got my BSN!

Despite it taking longer than I expected, I passed the NCLEX-RN exam on the first try, and finally became a registered nurse! I found a job at a local hospital. Even though the hours can be long, I love my job! Now I'm looking toward specializing, so I can advance even more!

Nancy's Career Map: Retail to RN



Trip Overview



Follow-Up Questions: Nancy

1. What was Nancy's starting point?

- a. Stocker at Home Depot
- b. Waitress at Applebee's
- c. Cashier at Target
- d. None of the above

2. What was the first important decision that she made toward realizing her goal of becoming an RN?

- a. She contacted her Career Counselor at The Academy
- b. She enrolled in community college
- c. She took the NCLEX-RN exam
- d. She decided to get her BSN

3. Do you think being an RN sounds like a good fit for you? Please explain.

Questions to answer with your group about this story:

- 1. What was her starting point? What barriers did she overcome just to get there?
- 2. What decisions did she have to make? Did these come earlier or later in her story?
- 3. What support did she need to get to the final point on her map?
- 4. Other than wages, how were the later jobs better than her first?
- 5. What roadblocks did she face? What did she do?
- 6. How is this career path similar to or different from what you want to achieve?

Notes:
