

**Success Spotlight:** Jose Paredes  
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Program: Adult Education  
Location: Marion County

### **STORY**

Jose moved to Indiana from Mexico when he was 14. He spent three years in high school but did not graduate and dropped out. In his early twenties, he'd earn his high school equivalency and bounce around from job to job, mostly in construction and restaurant work.

Eventually, he'd become a retail sales representative and sell cellphones, even becoming the lead trainer, teaching what he knew to new sales reps. "I felt like I couldn't grow anymore," he said. Plus, the sales job would give Jose six-day work weeks, which wasn't very family-friendly for him, his wife and their six children.



In 2023, Jose started researching what he could do next. He discovered Wayne Township Adult Education and wanted to pursue becoming a dental assistant. "I like to help people and be welcoming," he said. "I want to make people feel comfortable."

Jose enrolled in classes that he attended in the evening. For four months, he'd have a three-hour class three nights a week. "Those were the hardest four months," he said. "I kept pushing myself and it all paid off."

He'd pass the dental assistant certification on his first try, completing all the requirements right before the holidays. By the middle of January, Jose would land a job with a local dentist office, on the west side of Indianapolis, near his home. His hourly wage is more than \$10 higher than it was before earning his certification.

"My boss has made me feel welcomed since day one," Jose said. "I don't work weekends anymore and I get to spend more time with my family. I'm thankful my work has given me this opportunity."

Jose says making the move to the dental field has given him an opportunity to make work a career. He's looking at one day becoming a more specialized dental assistant, adding phlebotomy skills to his work, or becoming a dental hygienist. He added that his employer would possibly cover his expenses if he decides to further his career.