



IMPACT PROFILE: WILLIAM WARREN



PERSUING AN ARTISTIC PASSION AND CAREER THROUGH ACCELERATING OPPORTUNITY

In summer 2014, William Warren was feeling unprepared and hopeless about his academic and professional trajectories. William always had a passion for art, but wasn't sure how to apply his interest toward a future career. After receiving a postcard in the mail about the Accelerating Opportunity pathway offerings at Wichita Area Technical College, William decided to enroll in classes toward earning his Aerospace Coatings and Paint Technology technical certificate. He had high hopes for earning his GED and completing a few credits that he could apply toward finding a regional job in aerospace coatings.

"When I got that postcard in the mail about Accelerating Opportunity," says William, "that was the answer to my prayers. It was a sign for me to take charge of my life and it helped me do just that." William started his Accelerating Opportunity journey in fall 2014, and continued to work full time for 50 hours a week while attending either

morning or evening classes. He simultaneously earned his GED while beginning to earn credentials in Aerospace Coatings and Paint Technology. From the first day of his aerospace coating class, William realized that he had found a way to foster his love of art while establishing a sustainable career.

With the help of one of his Accelerating Opportunity professors, William was able to successfully secure an internship at a local aerospace company. For 6 months, he interned for 30 hours a week. Recently, he was hired for a full-time position with the

company. He now attends classes in the mornings and spends his afternoons and evenings honing his painting and coating skills in a real-world context.

By enrolling in the Aerospace Coatings and Paint Technology Accelerating Opportunities pathway, William was able to finally achieve his dream of connecting his love of art with his need for a lifelong profession. Through his coursework, his interest in photography, design, and painting has only deepened.

William graduated with his associate of applied science degree in May 2016. He plans to continue pursuing his education after graduation, with his eyes set on attaining a new certification in airbrushing. He hopes one day to be painting the logos he sees on the 747s that fly by as he makes his way into class each morning.

"Accelerating Opportunities not only helped me to get my GED—it helped me to create a career plan," says William, who is now employed full time and is only five months away from earning his associate's degree. "It got discouraging at times, especially with balancing school and work, but I knew that I had a support system in my Accelerated Opportunities career counselor, professors, and classmates. I am excited to see what is next for me!"

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Accelerating Opportunity increases the number of adults with low basic skills who enter postsecondary education and quickly earn credentials that lead to high-demand, living-wage jobs. The national initiative integrates Adult Basic Education with career and technical education and comprehensive support services into clear pathways that promote student success and meet the needs of local employers.

Jobs for the Future works with our partners to design and drive the adoption of education and career pathways leading from college readiness to career advancement for those struggling to succeed in today's economy. Across the country, we work to improve the pathways leading from high school to college to family-supporting careers. Our work aligns education and training to ensure that employers have access to a skilled workforce.

