

# Starting at \$6.50 an Hour

*Yenenesh Tesfaye*

**BEFORE YOU READ:** Describe your work trajectory. What was your first job? And what was your next job? How much did you get paid? Were you able to get more training while you worked?

## First Worked in the Kitchen

When I came to the United States in 1998, my first job was working in the kitchen at a hotel. I had two shifts per week. After two weeks of working, the manager asked me to work three days a week, and I said yes! I needed more days and hours. I got paid \$6.50 per hour.

## Then Cleaning Rooms

Then I got another job in the hotel. This job was cleaning rooms. It was hard because they gave us 16 rooms to clean in one shift. It was so hard, but I did it because I didn't have a choice.

## Got Trained to be a PCA

While I was working at the hotel, I took caregiver classes. I learned to be a Personal Care Assistant (PCA). When I finished my classes, I gave two weeks' notice to my supervisor at the hotel. I got a new job working at an assisted living center. I like working as a caregiver because I love helping elderly people, talking with them, hearing their stories, and learning from them.

## And Then a CNA

My next plan was to work at a nursing home. I had to be a Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA). I started working at the nursing home 16 hours a day for six days a week. I got paid \$10 per hour. I was happy.

Now, after years of working, I am getting paid \$22 or more an hour.



Read more about students who work in the healthcare field and explore nursing career pathways at <https://changeagent.nelrc.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/extras-explore-nursing-career.pdf>. You need to have a subscription and be logged in to access that link. Photo from rawpixel.com.

## Achieving My Goals

My plan was to save money to buy a house, and I did! I got married, and I have three kids. I am very happy. Now I want to focus on my education. I'm also starting my own business.

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