



Although I have never met SGT Carlos Puente Morales in person, the first thing I noticed was his infectious confidence when speaking. This is a young man who has big goals and knows how to pursue them. As a member of the Job Connection Education Program team, I had the privilege of watching the first of Carlos' dreams come to fruition.

Carlos first heard about JCEP, while drilling at Fort McCoy. He stated, "It was my first time hearing about this program, I was amazed how much impact JCEP would have preparing me for success." For Carlos, his dream of becoming a Police Officer was about to come true and according to Carlos, JCEP provided assistance that led to that success.

After registering on the JCEP website and receiving a letter welcoming him to the program, Carlos shared, "I didn't know exactly to what extent they [JCEP] would be able to assist me. But, it was amazing to find all the help they were able to give me." He continued with his praise of JCEP, "Starting with my resume, they gave it a more professional look, and then the mock interview, where they gave me great feedback."

Carlos understands the importance of having a resume that reflects his skills and abilities. He stated, "Once I saw my resume done by JCEP, I was so surprised because it looked so professional and highlighted all of my accomplishments." He further stated, "My improved resume definitely gave me an edge over other resumes."

After his resume was reviewed and updated, Carlos participated in a Mock Interview with a team of interviewers to help in preparing him for the upcoming panel interview with local Law Enforcement. The practice interview was specifically geared toward the upcoming event that was most critical to his job success. He laughingly commented, "I thought I had a strong scheme on how to do interviews, but I was proved wrong!"

Carlos shared that due to the mock interview, he was able to improve his interviewing skills, and during his actual interview he 'felt calm, secure, and very comfortable with the process,' which attributed to obtaining his dream job with the City of Ottumwa Police Department. He said, "The mock interview was the best! The tips and suggestions I received from the professional members were huge. I was truly set up for success and received excellent feedback for my upcoming job interview." Furthermore he commented, "I was told by a member of the Police Department that I totally smoked the interview! The Officer stated I came out on top from all the other applicants." Carlos is confident that his success during the actual job interview was because of all he learned through the JCEP practice interview process.

One of the things that make JCEP so unique and successful according to Carlos is the one-on-one interaction between the Employment Specialist and the participant. He said, "The one-on-one was excellent, all the process from beginning to end was so incredible. All the professional support, advice,

suggestions, and feedback were directly related to my obtaining employment.” He went on to share, “Everything the staff did for me, the follow up emails and phone calls, everything they could do for me brought me success.” Carlos also shared that the follow up after he obtained employment was just as important, because he felt the JCEP Counselor truly cared about him as a person.

Another of Carlos comments was for other Soldiers, encouraging them to utilize the services that JCEP provides. “Soldiers need to sign up for the program. It is a huge program that is offered to Vets to improve on their skills and to find a job or better employment. They [JCEP] give you everything you need in order to succeed in a very competitive world.”

I love the confidence that one hears in Carlos voice. His final comment reflects his belief in JCEP and spotlights why the program was created, “One thing that I can say is I am so thankful I signed up for JCEP because it gave me an edge through the job search process. I am so glad as a Veteran we come back to the civilian side and have a program like this.”

Truly we, the JCEP team, are the thankful ones who have the pleasure of seeing a young man’s dreams come true by providing him with the skills to obtain that dream job.

Congratulations, Officer Carlos Puente Morales of the City of Ottumwa Police Department.