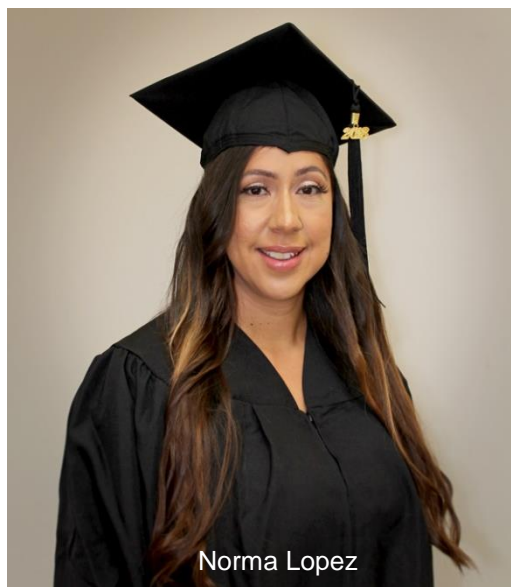




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Fresno County Public Library Celebrates Its First Career Online High School Graduate



Norma Lopez

Fresno, California -- On Saturday June 9, 2018, the Fresno County Public Library celebrated the first graduation of a student from its Career Online High School program—Norma Lopez of Fresno.

The graduation ceremony was held at FCPL’s Betty Rodriguez Regional Library. About 40 family members, friends and library staff members joined in the celebration. It included a procession, diploma acceptance and even moving the tassel on her graduation cap.

“I am so excited to have completed my high school education. I am an example for my children about what is possible if you put your mind to it,” said Norma, a 36-year-old mother of two and wife. Her children were inspired by their mother’s accomplishment and are definitely planning to attend college.

After the graduation ceremony, another family met with Library staff to inquire about COHS and obtaining a high school diploma. Obviously, Norma’s enthusiasm is contagious!

After completing a prerequisite course and passing a 30-day probationary period, Norma enrolled in COHS on May 18, 2017. She made many sacrifices to pursue her diploma. After a year’s work, Norma graduated with a 3.0 grade point average. She is currently working part-time and will attend junior college this fall to continue pursuing her higher education.

COHS is an online high school for adults who want to earn an accredited high school diploma. It is offered by the Fresno County Public Library in partnership with Gale, a Cengage company. There is a pressing need for this service on all levels. The Center on Education and the Workforce at Georgetown University reports that by the year 2020, 12% of jobs are projected to be available to those with “less than high school education”, meaning 88% of jobs available will require at least a high school diploma. According to estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau’s ACS in 2016, over 32 million



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adults in the United States would not have a high school diploma or equivalency, and of those adults, there are 169,313 in Fresno County alone.

This is 24% of Fresno County adults.

Students can earn a diploma from COHS in as little as six months and have up to 18 months to graduate. Previous credits earned can be transferred to aid in graduating faster. FCPL also has a few COHS scholarships available for qualified applicants, which makes the program free of charge.

In addition to earning a high school diploma, COHS students can also earn career certificates in general professional skills, childcare, protection services, transportation services, Homeland Security, office management, retail skills, and food skills.

COHS is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Council on Accreditation and School Improvement (SACS CASI), an accredited division of AdvancED. Anyone wishing to learn more about this valuable program should contact FCPL's Literacy Services Center at (559) 600-9243.



Literacy Coordinator Deborah Bernal and Associate County Librarian Raman Bath present Norma Lopez (center) with her COHS Diploma.

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