

## **Purpose Statement /MPA Public Administration**

**Charlotte Dudley**

Over the years my family and I have made several moves across the country. Sometimes it was to pursue educational goals, at times work opportunities became available or to live closer to family. Each move has provided many different experiences. I have worked as a case manager for the State Offices for Children and Families, an adoption worker for a private adoption agency, and a Head Start teacher. I have also been a program coordinator for several private nonprofit agencies (a children's hospital, a legal aid agency, and a managed care provider). I love to meet new people, learn new ideas and give new things a try. I feel lucky that I have been able to have these different experiences. Earning a graduate degree in public administration seems like it would allow me to blend all my work experiences with new knowledge.

My three favorite jobs have been a program coordinator at Scotts Run Settlement House (SRSH), a project coordinator for a federal grant Northeast Oregon Collaboration for Child Safety (NOOCS), and a program coordinator at Greater Oregon Behavioral Health Inc (GOBHI)

SRSH is a settlement house run by the United Methodist Church. I worked there in 2000. It is a wonderful place that provides a variety of supports to families living in Osage, West Virginia. This was my first experience with true community collaboration and providing support to families. We had a food pantry, nutrition program, parenting classes, a daycare and so much more. I was able to work with community partners students at West Virginia University, church leaders and youth groups. There were so many programs that were developed and successfully implemented. Volunteers and givers felt great about helping and the recipients were grateful.

Access to services was easy and all in need were very welcomed and respected. This has stuck with me. I am hoping that in the MPA program I will be able to learn more about current practices and policies and updated ways to engage people and communities.

NOCCS was a 2 ½ million-dollar federal grant for three county collaboratives in Eastern Oregon. I was with the grant program from 2009-2012. The purpose of NOCCS was to promote child safety and permanency through increasing drug and alcohol, mental health and wrap around services to families. I was the project coordinator and worked closely with the researcher, the federal grant program and the directors of the leading agencies involved. I was able to learn a lot about data collection, report writing, and developing cross systems programing. In the beginning, the project was struggling to engage and retain families. An extremely valuable strategy that we used was rapid process improvement. We held focus groups, stakeholder meetings, reviewed intake process and got feedback about client services. From there we identified issues and collected data to identify problem areas. We developed ideas for improvement, implemented them and collected data to review change. If it did not help to improve the issues/barrier after 4 weeks, we would develop new ideas and try again. Collecting and reviewing data was an important part of the process. An example might be a reminder call the day before the appointment and a gas voucher if needed. I am hoping that in the MPA program I will be able to use my computer more and develop updated/ improved computer skills. I have very basic computer skills and have done group chats, Zoom meetings etc. but I don't love it. I am hoping that more exposure and use will help me in a professional environment.

GOBHI is a rural/frontier behavioral health and social service network. GOBHI in partnership with Moda Health is the Coordinated Care Organization for twelve counties. The Coordinated Care Organization is a network of health care providers who work together to serve people with Medicaid as their health care coverage. Better health, better care and lower costs for individuals and communities are the primary goals of the provider. As a project coordinator I traveled across several counties to support the local efforts. Work duties included facilitating group meetings, assisting in completing community health assessments, writing small health improvement grants, providing technical assistance, and report writing showing progress on meeting state benchmarks to better health. I came to truly value cross collaboration, flexible funding, focus on prevention, and data driven program design. I also believe that these are solid approaches to address barriers to care and service. In the MPA program I am hoping to learn about outcomes of past programs, changes in focus and priorities of community-based programs and current funding opportunities. I am also excited to learn about innovative practices and approaches to support people, families, and communities.

I believe that the Evergreen MPA program would be a good match for me for several reasons. I am very much drawn to a program that provides in person learning. I am looking forward to working collaboratively and learning from others. I always value the opportunities to be a part of teams who prioritize fairness and equity, strength-based approaches, and advocating for social change. The Evergreen State College community seems to share very similar values with me.