

Statement of Purpose

I am applying to Evergreen's Master of Public Administration (MPA) program to advance my city government career and continue to give back to communities. Pursuing this professional program relates to my work experience, community involvement, and my aspiration to pursue a career in public service as an executive leader. Learning from your MPA program will equip me with the skills necessary to meet my goals. Once achieved, my newly shaped skill set will also allow me to serve as a connector and a motivator for the various communities of Washington State.

Prompt: How have your experiences in education, employment, and public or community work influenced you to seek a graduate degree in public administration?

My educational quest mirrors my determination to keep moving forward. I have had several delays on my education road while working and supporting a family. Now that my loved ones are adults, this gives me time to complete my educational goals. These last couple of years, I have worked full-time and focused on completing my undergraduate degree. In May 2023, I will graduate from Capella University with a Bachelor of Science in Business with a focus on management and leadership. My tenacity in pursuing an undergraduate degree and my quality work experience have influenced me to apply for a public administration graduate program.

I have supported the general public since I was a young girl. Growing up, my family was very active in the community – sharing the word of Christ, advocating, feeding, and clothing individuals and families – this became my way of life. When my children were young, we fed and clothed individuals and families in need. I continue to support non-profit organizations to

promote their messages, raise capital, and provide food and clothing. Public service comes naturally to me, which makes sense why I selected the occupations I have.

I spent years working in hospital administration as a Service Quality Specialist, whose role was to investigate, report, and resolve patient complaints and grievances. I was responsible for interviewing involved staff (no matter their title) to obtain complaint resolution. This position raised my awareness of economic and social disparities and provided a vessel for me to practice the art of advocating for patients' rights. This position paved the path for me into public service.

The transition to my city government role started with the Seattle Public Utilities department, and I served as a Utility Representative, opening customer accounts and responding to billing inquiries. I advanced to the Finance Administrative Services department as a Complaint Investigator. I fell in love with my ability to advocate for citizens by raising their voices to leadership and working in partnership with city departments to create supportive processes.

I currently work as an Administrative Manager for the Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections. In this role, I direct the day-to-day operations of the administrative team of sixteen incredible support staff. I have the pleasure of overseeing our Trade Licensing program, Inspection Scheduling, Sewer Capacity reporting to the King County Wastewater Treatment Division, and other administrative duties for the department. I can share collaborative spaces with senior leaders within my department, business alliances, private sector agencies, contractors, and citizens. My relational culture soft skills will support collaboration within a cohort environment.

My work proficiencies have fulfilled my public service basic groundwork, which has influenced me to apply for Evergreen's MPA program. My City budget and finance exposure, leadership, management and collaboration, and interactions with the community fit the background experience needed for an MPA program candidate.

Prompt: Why do you want to pursue graduate study in public administration in general and at Evergreen in particular?

When I first laid eyes on Evergreen's MPA program website, I was astonished by the content. I appreciated the cohort learning community, which creates inclusiveness, sparks critical thinking, and embraces diversity. I know what it takes to succeed in the City of Seattle's workforce, and this MPA program offers the tools (best practices and operational strategies) that can be used in the city to elevate my participation in local government action. Having an opportunity to share my public service experiences will be beneficial to the cohort and open space for collaborative learning. Likewise, the richness of the program will build my confidence and provide the appropriate competencies needed to advance my leadership.

I selected Evergreen State College for its unique qualities: the flexibility of attending classes in the evening, weekend, hybrid, and virtual. This flexibility is desirable because it allows me to continue my public service career while studying for my MPA. Being a local institution with a pulse on local government is another quality of Evergreen.

I would be proud to be a part of an educational institution that values public good services to our society. In my research for graduate schools, I discovered that Evergreen ranked number one in 2022 for its contribution to social mobility, research, and promoting public

service. Evergreen is reaching high and performing outside the regular college participation scope, and I want to join such bravery and innovation.

My dream job is to become a Business Operations Director. I am an experienced administrative leader but need more focus on critical business operations such as strategy, data management, budget analysis, contract policy, and funding procedures. Evergreen offers courses that focus on these competencies. I am excited about the possibility of taking these courses: Policy Finance and Budgeting for Public Administration, Analytical Techniques for Public Service I and II, Strategic Planning, Leadership Communication for High Impact. These courses and others will bridge the gap between my first-level and executive-level management skills.

While at Evergreen, I will continue to build relationships with community and city leaders, and I will continue to build my management career. Once granted, an MPA, combined with my city experience, places me in status to perform my best work for our communities. I am committed to reaching my educational goal, and this MPA is the glue to create this reality.

Prompt: Which elements of the Evergreen MPA mission draw you to the program? For example: working collaboratively, embracing diversity, and valuing fairness and equity.

It is beautiful to see Evergreen's admission office inquiring about the elements of its mission statement. I wholeheartedly value all of these elements but specifically, thinking critically and creatively, embracing diversity, and advocating attracted me to this program. Combining all these elements tells me my voice is valued and my contribution is needed. These values are welcoming and provide safe spaces for students to do their best work.

Critical thinking is an in-depth analysis of an issue. The ability to creatively conduct this analysis leads to collaborative conversations and begins new processes. Embracing diversity in an educational environment allows the team to be more creative, supportive, and inclusive, increasing equity, fairness, and well-being. Advocating is the daily work of a public servant. So, to have Evergreen value, this practice means a lot to me as an individual, student, and member of society.

I see how I fit in Evergreen's mission statement and am drawn to the program offerings. I resonated with the statement, "imagine new possibilities in order to accomplish positive change in our workplace and our communities" (Evergreen State College, 2023, Mission and Philosophy, para. 1). This is the work I am doing as a Co-Lead for the City of Seattle's Race and Social Justice Initiative. We are educating, sharing stories, and raising awareness of what it means to have a relational culture.

Finally, I was surprised but honored to read about Evergreen's Social Contract, a road map to being courteous and respectful. This contract is a great way to build community around people of various backgrounds, disabilities, religions, gender, and age. I am a good fit for this MPA program, and after reading my Statement of Purpose, I hope you agree.

References

Evergreen State College. (2023). Mission and Philosophy. MPA Program.
<https://www.evergreen.edu/mpa/studenthandbook/mission> References